

Did you know that you can end your enrollment with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) by visiting the step.state.gov site? If you previously submitted a paper enrollment form to the U.S. consulate, you may end your enrollment by sending an email request to: ShanghaiACS@state.gov.

The Consulate's PM2.5 **Air Quality Monitor** data can be viewed at shanghai.usconsulate.gov/airmonitor.html

American Citizen Services (ACS) Contact Information

**U.S. Consulate General,
Shanghai, China**
1038 West Nanjing Road,
8/F Westgate Mall
梅龙镇广场 (Méi Lóng
Zhèn Guǎng Chǎng)
Open 8:00am - 11:30am
and 1:30pm - 3:30pm
Monday to Friday
*Closed on Wednesday
afternoons, weekends,
and holidays.
Homepage:
[shanghai.usembassy-
china.org.cn/service.html](http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/service.html)
After Hours Emergencies:
(86-21) 3217-4650

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Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

Issue 57

October 2012

Scams, Scams!

The American Citizen Services (ACS) unit is regularly contacted by Americans victimized by scams that take advantage of their generosity or ignorance of local norms and culture. While petty theft remains the most prevalent type of crime Westerners encounter in China, the diversity and sophistication of scams is increasing. While the following list is not meant to be all-encompassing it does forewarn and forearm you against the most common scams encountered by Americans here.

General Safety Advice

- Shanghai is a big city with big city problems.
- If it is not a good idea at home; it is probably not a good idea here.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Always be aware of your surroundings. Look at the people close to you and watch out for "accidental" nudging and touching.
- Think about leaving valuables and extra cash behind in a safe place when you go out.

- Don't carry all your valuables, cash, credit cards, etc. in one pocket or bag – spread it out.

****NEW** "Mimicking Phone Numbers" –**

You receive a call on your mobile phone from someone claiming to be the police from the "Economic Crimes Bureau" in Beijing. You are told your bank account is involved with money laundering and that you are now being investigated. You are told that you may verify the incoming call by checking online or in a phone book for the number of the "Economic Crimes Bureau". The caller is patient and tells you that he will hold the line while you check to verify the number. You check with different resources and confirm the phone number of the incoming call belongs to the police in Beijing. You then follow the caller's instructions and provide him with detailed information about your bank accounts. You transfer the money to the safe account as instructed by the caller. You later find the money that you transferred is gone. How this Scam Works: To attract clients, telecom operators enable clients to set the incoming number they want to be displayed on the phone of some-

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Upcoming Holidays & Other Closures

A full list of all of our holiday closings is online at <http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/holidays.html>. The ACS Unit will be **CLOSED** to the public on:

November 12, Monday

Veteran's Day

(退伍军人节 Tuiwǔ Jūnrén Jié)

November 22, Thursday

Thanksgiving Day

(感恩节 Gǎn'ēn Jié)

Global Entry Program



Have you noticed the new kiosks at U.S. airport immigration checkpoints?

The Global Entry Program allows U.S. citizens and permanent residents to use Global Entry kiosks to speed their entry into the United States.

Travelers must be pre-approved for the Global Entry program. All applicants undergo a rigorous background check and interview before enrollment.

Though intended for frequent international travelers, there is no minimum number of trips necessary to qualify for the program. Participants may

enter the United States by using automated kiosks located at select airports.

At airports, program participants proceed to Global Entry kiosks, present their machine-readable passport or U.S. permanent resident card, place their fingertips on the scanner for fingerprint verification, and make a customs declaration. The kiosk issues the traveler a transaction receipt and directs the traveler to baggage claim and the exit.

For further details and enrollment requirements please check out the following website: www.globalentry.gov/about.html.

Travel Warnings and Alerts

Security reminder: It is advisable that you and your family review your personal security profile and be aware of your surroundings at all times.

Since our previous Newsletter, the U.S. Department of State has issued new **Travel Warnings** for the following countries:

<u>Tunisia</u>	10/19/2012
<u>Colombia</u>	10/03/2012

Travel Warnings are issued to describe long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff. This information is available at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html.

The U.S. Department of State has not issued any new **Travel Alerts**.

Travel Alerts are issued to disseminate

information about short-term conditions generally within a particular country or region that pose imminent risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, anniversaries of terrorist events, election-related demonstrations or violence, and high-profile events such as international conferences or regional sports events are examples of conditions that might generate a Travel Alert. This information is available at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1766.html.

The most up-to-date information regarding permitted and **prohibited items** on flights can be viewed online at www.tsa.gov.

For additional information, please visit "Americans Traveling Abroad" on the U.S. Department of State website: http://travel.state.gov/visa/americans/americans_1252.html.

Students traveling abroad may wish to visit the State Department site de-

signed for them: <http://studentsabroad.state.gov/>.

To obtain up-to-date information on security conditions, please call 1-888-407-4747 (toll free in the United States), or +1-202-501-4444 if you are outside the United States.



Local News: Air Pollution Worst In 6 Months

Oct. 29, 2012 (by Ni Yinbin, Shanghai Daily) -- Shanghai has been experiencing some of its most serious and long-lasting air pollution in months, as well as weather conditions that have contributed to thick clouds and a haze that has grounded some flights and led to vehicular crashes which killed at least one person and injured dozens.

Some expressways were closed from 3am to 9am yesterday because fog and haze created dangerous driving conditions, causing vehicles to line up for kilometers, according to the Shanghai highway authority.

Serious pollution that started on Saturday may continue today, though conditions may improve tomorrow, forecasters said. The PM2.5 readings of tiny airborne particles smaller than 2.5 micrometers started to rise on Saturday afternoon and exceeded 300 micrograms per cubic meter yesterday morning, four times the standard for good air quality, which is 75 micrograms per cubic meter, according to the Shanghai Environmental Monitoring Center.

All 10 monitoring stations for PM2.5 across Shanghai turned on a purple light to indicate the second-highest level in the six-color alert system, meaning serious air pollution. That means those with some health conditions such as pulmonary problems may want to stay indoors when possible.

The city's 24-hour average reading for PM2.5 ending yesterday afternoon was above 220 micrograms per cubic meter, the highest in the past six months.

The readings started to drop in the afternoon and could improve with some drizzle tonight and a change in the wind, but reduction has been slow, the center said. The air pollution conditions should clear up more tomorrow. The duration of the pollution conditions is the longest in the past five months, according to the center.

A cold front has brought pollution and a regional haze with it, and the city also has been under a static pressure field with only light winds and high humidity, which has helped trap pollution, the center said.

Colder temperatures on way

The city is expected to get chillier this week with the arrival of more cold fronts, according to the Shanghai Meteorological Bureau. Today is forecast cloudy to drizzly, with a low of 16 degrees Celsius to a high of 21. The highs should drop to around 18 degrees from tomorrow to Friday and the low should go as low as 10 degrees on Thursday.

"The city is on a trend of getting colder, but it has been gradual," said Zhang Ruiyi, a chief service officer of the weather bureau. Zhang said tomorrow should be more clear, just partly cloudy for the rest of the week.

The fog and haze may have contributed to a number of crashes, traffic officials said.

One person died and five others were injured when three vehicles were involved in a rear-end crash on the G60 Expressway in the fog yesterday morning, police said.

A truck hit a sedan, which hit another truck in the front, witnesses said. The driver of the first truck died at scene while the injured, including a Spaniard riding in the sedan, were rushed to the hospital. They were reported to be stable yesterday afternoon.

Around 5am, a No. 117 bus hit a sedan on Xincun Road near Shuiquan Road in Putuo District, during a left turn. A passenger in the sedan was injured, said Xinmin.cn.

Around 7am, a taxi and a minibus involved in a crash overturned on Nanpu Bridge.

Around 12:40pm, a bus rear-ended a truck on the Bao'an Expressway in Jiading District, injuring 44 people, four of whom were in critical condition, officials said.

The truck, carrying a full load of steel plates, pulled over on a bridge on Bao'an Road after a flat tire. The bus of the Jiating Line, traveling at high speeds, crashed into the rear of the truck. The driver of the bus may have to have a leg amputated, doctors said.

At least 70 flights were canceled and 27 delayed at the city's Hongqiao and Pudong international airports. The airports were able to resume normal operations in the afternoon as temperatures rose and the fog lifted.

Air Quality Monitor at U.S. Consulate Shanghai

The U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai has installed a PM2.5 air quality monitor to measure fine particles in the air at its Huaihai Middle Road compound. Data from this monitor are used to calculate the Air Quality Index (AQI) which provides a health resource for the American community.

If you would like to view our data, please look for us on Twitter (@cgshanghai) or view our website at <http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/airmonitor.html>.

Taking Photos of Your Baby or Toddler

Your photo is a vital part of your passport application. Please review the information here on how to provide a suitable photo to avoid passport processing delays: http://travel.state.gov/passport/pptphotoreq/pptphotoreq_5333.html.

We recommend you use a professional passport photo service to ensure that your photo meets all the requirements.

When taking a photo of your baby or toddler, no other person should be in the photo, and your child should be

looking at the camera with his or her **eyes open**.

Tip 1: Lay your baby on his or her back on a plain white or off-white sheet. This will ensure your baby's head is supported and provide a plain background for the photo. Make certain there are no shadows on your baby's face, especially if you take a picture from above with the baby lying down.

Tip 2: Cover a car seat with a plain white or off-white sheet and take a picture of your child in the car seat. This

will also ensure your baby's head is supported.



Reporting International Financial Scams & Resources for Victims

The State Department's information on international financial scams can help you report fraud to the appropriate U.S. authorities like the FBI, Secret Service, Federal Trade Commission, and U.S. Postal Inspector, or to the appropriate overseas authorities including the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the United Kingdom's Metropolitan Police. Contact information can be found on the State Department's website that provides resources for victims.

http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/financial_scams/financial_scams_3155.html

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4522.html

The first website includes steps that can be used to protect yourself against *future* identity theft because the fraud perpetrators can use your personal information to open bank accounts or obtain credit cards in your name. Remember, some losses may be tax deductible, so consult a qualified tax advisor or the IRS to see if you qualify.

Financial fraud can have an emotional impact on victims and their families. The Identity Theft Resource Center Victim Guide has information about the emotional impact of identity theft, and much of this advice is relevant to fraud victims.

http://www.idtheftcenter.org/v_resource/s/v_intro.shtml

Internet Dating and Romance Scams

U.S. citizens should be alert to attempts at fraud by persons claiming to live outside of the U.S., professing friendship, romantic interest, and/or marriage intentions over the Internet.

Typically, once a connection is made, the correspondent asks the U.S. citizen to send money or credit card information for living expenses, travel/medical expenses, or "visa costs." Sometimes, the correspondent notifies the U.S. citizen that a close family member, usually the mother, is in desperate need of surgery and begins to request monetary assistance. Internet dating and romance scams have advanced to the point where several U.S. citizens

have reported losing tens of thousands of dollars through such scams.

Correspondents who quickly move to expressions of romantic interest or discussion of intimate matters are likely scammers. A request for funds almost always marks a fraudulent correspondent. U.S. citizens are cautioned against sending any money to persons they have not actually met in person.

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/financial_scams/financial_scams_4554.html

Counterfeit and Pirated Goods

Do not buy counterfeit or pirated goods, even if they are widely available. Not only are bootleg and knock-off goods illegal in the U.S., if you purchase them, you may also be breaking local laws. Please remember that U.S. passports can only be issued by the U.S. Department of State.

Questions on how to obtain a U.S. passport or green card can be posed to your nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Forewarned Is Forearmed – SCAMS Endemic To Shanghai

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one they call. Bottom line, you cannot always trust that a phone call is truly coming from the number appearing on your phone. If you are concerned about your bank accounts, it's best to contact your bank or the local authorities directly.

“Art Show / Art Student” scam – “Hi, I’m an art major at a Chinese university. We are showing our work nearby and would love for you to have a look. Don’t worry, entrance is free and there’s no need to buy anything.” If you follow this “art student” you will be pressured to purchase expensive, low-grade art prints.

“Tea Ceremony/English student” scam – “Hi, we are English students at a local university. Would you mind helping us practice our English? In exchange, we will treat you to a traditional Chinese tea ceremony.” After ordering tea and snacks they will excuse themselves. Soon the bill will arrive and very large man will force you to pay an exorbitant amount of money before allowing you to leave. Real English students will not mind going to a place of your choosing to practice their English for an hour.

“Bar tabs” – Better to pay as you go. Starting a tab makes it possible for a bartender to hand you a bar bill of \$500. If you decline to pay you could be threatened with physical violence until you pay (usually by credit card), before being escorted out.

“Injured Relative / Arrested Relative” scam – “Hi, I’m a friend of your grandchild here in China and she was just seriously injured (usually in a traffic accident) and/or arrested. In order for her to receive medical care in China

you must pay all fees upfront. The American Consulate won’t help. Please wire \$2000 to my account so I can ensure your granddaughter receives the necessary medical treatment.” Always best to try and contact your relative directly, or call ACS to help you find out the facts, if someone tells you that they are in trouble and need you to wire them money ASAP. In China medical facilities will usually contact the U.S. Consulate if an American citizen is admitted without anyone to assist. We will never refuse to assist American citizens in need.

“Please Hold the Line for the Police” – You receive a phone call from someone claiming to be from your bank or the police station and you are told that someone assumed your identity and used your credit card to commit credit card fraud, which is now under investigation by the Public Security Bureau (PSB). You are informed that the PSB requires your bank account information to complete their investigation. After providing your personally identifiable information over the phone that included your savings account information, your account is liquidated. You later find out that the person who called you was not from your bank or the police. If you receive a call from the police asking for personal information you should ask them to wait, and contact your nearest police station to inquire into the situation in person.

“Business Deal” – You have been doing business with a Chinese company for some time and receive an email asking you to send the next wire transfer to a new account number. After wiring the money you are asked to resend the payment because it never arrived. After rewiring the payment you are again notified that the payment did not

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Tax News: Statement of Specified Foreign Financial Assets

The Internal Revenue Service would like to remind U.S. taxpayers that they may need to file Form 8938 (Statement of Specified Foreign Financial Assets). It is important for taxpayers to determine whether they are subject to this new requirement because the law imposes significant penalties for failing to comply.

Certain U.S. taxpayers holding specified foreign financial assets with an aggregate value exceeding \$50,000 will report information about those assets on new Form 8938, which must be attached to the taxpayer’s annual income tax return. Higher asset thresholds apply to U.S. taxpayers who file a joint tax return or who reside abroad.

Form 8938 reporting applies for specified foreign financial assets in which the taxpayer has an interest in taxable years starting after March 18, 2010. For most individual taxpayers, this means they will start filing Form 8938 with their 2011 income tax return to be filed this coming tax filing season.

Refer to Form 8938 instructions for more information on assets that do not have to be reported.

More information is available on the IRS tax site, specifically at <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/corporations/article/0,,id=236664,00.html>.

Forewarned Is Forearmed – SCAMS Endemic To Shanghai

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arrive and that you should try sending it to another account number. At which time you become extremely suspicious and discover the email address is slightly different from the company's real email and/or the person who has been contacting you left the company a month before.

"IRS scam" – You received an email from the IRS claiming they cannot process your recent tax return because you did not include a photocopy of your state or federal ID. The IRS does NOT generally initiate fax or emails to taxpayers, nor does the IRS discuss tax account matters with taxpayers via email or fax. The IRS never requests security-related personal information, such as your SSN or PIN numbers.

"Diversity Visa" – You receive an email congratulating you because you've won a Diversity Visa (DV) and although the DV participation was free, U.S. law and regulations require every DV winner to pay a visa processing fee of \$819. The email goes on to state the fee must be paid using a Western Union money transfer and will be processed by the U.S. Embassy in the United Kingdom. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES** should money be sent to anyone to participate in the DV Lottery. The State Department's Kentucky Consular Center does not send email notifications to DV entrants informing the winning entries.

"Real Estate" scam – You sign a contract for an apartment you want to rent and hand over the deposit and first few months rent to who you believe is the landlord. All seems legitimate until you return home one night to discover the real landlord in the apartment demanding to know who you are and why you have moved into his apartment. You find

that the person you signed the contract with has skipped town with your money and the real estate agent has no recollection of you.

"Black Taxi" – "Where do you want to go?" "Taxi?" If you get in, make no mistake, you will be grossly over charged and potentially robbed in a secluded area by the driver's friends. The same goes for motorcycles charging for transportation.

"Fake Police" – You are stopped on the road (usually near an area frequented by expats) and asked to show your passport to a person



claiming to be a police officer. When you cannot show your passport, you are asked to pay an on-the-spot fine of RMB500. First, if they are real police they will have no problem with showing you their I.D. when asked. Moreover, real police officers will go with you to their station where you will be issued a receipt for the fine.

"Pickpockets" – Typically, a single man or a pair of women with babies strapped to their chests approach you from behind during your walk near a popular tourist area (Nanjing Rd). Unbeknownst to you, they unzip your bag and quickly steal everything that looks expensive. Remember to keep your bags in front of you and do not place valuables in your back pocket.

"Child Beggars & Flower Sellers" – "Money, money!" or "Flowers, Flowers!" Money dropped into their cup will be taken by their adult handler (perhaps even their kidnapper) who is exploiting the child and your humanitarian nature. If you want to help, consider offering food instead.

"Buy a Car" scam – A Chinese based website states you can pay 30% of the total cost of the car now through Western Union and the balance upon delivery. In the end you never receive your car or see your money again.

"Black Money" – In order to prevent the theft of U.S. currency being shipped overseas, the U.S. government has a process to coat \$100 bills with a special ink (usually black). I have intercepted one shipment but need your help purchasing a special solvent to "clean" the bills. I am happy to share the proceeds with you. Of course, the process is bogus, and you will lose whatever money you invest.

"Stolen Wallet" – "Hi, my wife and I (dressed nicely) are tourists and had our wallets stolen. Could you loan us RMB100? When we return home we will send it back to you." You will not receive any money back and have just been victimized by a con artist.

"Dropped Metro Card" scam – The taxi driver drops your transportation card as he attempts to hand it back to you in the backseat. The next time you go to use it you find the card has a zero balance. What happened? The taxi driver saw that you had a lot of money on your card and dropped it by his feet to quickly switch it for an empty one. Circumvent this scam by placing a sticker or other clear identifying marker on your card to confirm the card handed back to you is indeed your own.